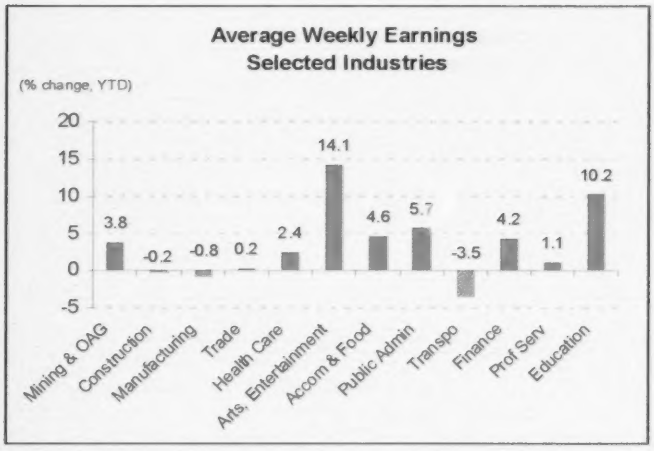
## Average Weekly Earnings

***Alberta wage growth moderates…***

Alberta's average weekly earnings rose for the third consecutive month in March, up 1.3% from February to $998.49 (seasonally adjusted). This brought the year-to-date growth to 2.5% in the first quarter of 2010, close to the national average and a moderation from the 2.9% increase recorded last year. On an industry basis, 13 out of the total 18 industries posted wage growth in the first quarter, including mining and oil and gas extraction (3.8%), finance and real estate (4.2%), education (10.2%) and arts, entertainment and recreation (14.1%). Meanwhile, wages in transportation and warehousing (-3.5%), manufacturing (-0.8%) and wholesale trade (-0.6%) declined while construction wages were essentially unchanged (-0.2%).




## Rigs Drilling

***Drilling activity falls slightly in May…***

The average number of rigs drilling in Alberta edged down to 56 in May (based on preliminary data) related to a seasonal slowdown in the spring. Nonetheless, drilling activity in Alberta has been generally improving since reaching a low in May 2009, with activity in the first five months of the year up 41.5% from the same period last year.

## Farm Cash Receipts

***Lower prices continue to batter Alberta farmers…***

Following a decline of 8.1% in 2009, farm cash receipts for Alberta farmers slid further by 17.3% year-over-year to $2.3 billion in the first quarter of 2010. The decrease was due to persistent declines in the price of major grains and oilseeds since their peak in 2008 owing to a growing world supply as well as reduced sales of canola, soybeans and corn.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Canadian Dollar (US¢/C$)** | |
| May 28, 2010 | 95.25 |
| May 21, 2010 | 94.61 |
| 2010-11 YTD | 97.94 |
| **WTI Oil US$/bbl** | |
| May 27, 2010 | $ 74.55 |
| May 20, 2010 | $ 68.01 |
| 2010-11 YTD | $ 79.61 |
| **Nymex Natural Gas C$/MMBtu** * | |
| **Near-month Contract** | |
| May 28, 2010 | $ 4.57 |
| May 21, 2010 | $ 4.41 |

*Estimate based on Nymex Futures Market Price

## Global Developments

***Energy prices, loonie get a boost this week…***

After dipping below US$68/bbl early this week, oil prices climbed to close at around US$75/bbl on Thursday. The rebound came on a string of positive economic news from the U.S. and China's affirmation that it will continue to invest in Europe, which has put downward pressure on the safe-haven US dollar and fuelled a euro rally. Consequently, the loonie jumped to a fresh one-week high of 95.25 US cents today (noon rate).

***OECD raises growth forecast…***

The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) raised their growth forecast for OECD countries to 2.7% this year and 2.8% next year, up from their November forecast of 1.9% in 2010 and 2.5% in 2011. However, the OECD cited the recent turmoil in Europe's sovereign debt markets and overheating in emerging economies as significant risks to the global outlook. Given that Canada's recovery is already underway, the OECD recommended the Bank of Canada to normalize its policy rate without delay.

## Canadian Corporate Profits

***Corporate profits continue to improve…***

Corporate profits rose for the third consecutive time in the first quarter of the year, up 4.8% from the previous quarter. Overall, gains were mixed as 10 out of 22 industries posted growth including manufacturing (12.6%), wholesale trade (8.1%), retail trade (11.5%), and oil and gas (40.4%).

# Current Economic Indicators

| Population | 2008 | 2009 | 2010YTD* | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Population[1] (000's) (level) | 3,596 | 3,688 | 3,708 | -- | 3,712 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| % change | 2.4 | 2.6 | 2.1 | -- | 1.9 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Net Interprovincial Migraton[1] (level) | 15,317 | 23,006 | -5,315 | -- | -2,780 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Net International Migration[1] (level) | 20,039 | 20,074 | 12,696 | -- | 4,720 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Net Non-permanent Residents[1] (level) | 18,536 | 19,058 | 1,014 | -- | -1,425 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| **Labour Market** | | | | | | | | | |
| Employment (000's) | 2,013 | 1,988 | 1,977 | 1,995 | 1,988 | 1,973 | 1,969 | 1,979 | -- |
| % change | 2.8 | -1.3 | -1.0 | -1.0 | -1.6 | -1.0 | -1.0 | -0.4 | -- |
| Unemployment Rate (%) | 3.6 | 6.6 | 7.1 | 6.6 | 6.6 | 6.9 | 7.5 | 7.4 | -- |
| Participation Rate (%) | 74.7 | 74.3 | 73.3 | 73.8 | 73.4 | 73.0 | 73.2 | 73.4 | -- |
| Average Weekly Earnings ($) NEW! | 923.21 | 950.13 | 982.62 | 949.32 | 963.38 | 985.99 | 998.49 | -- | -- |
| % change | 6.0 | 2.9 | 2.5 | 0.2 | 1.6 | 2.1 | 3.6 | -- | -- |
| **Price Indices** | | | | | | | | | |
| Consumer Price Index | 3.1 | -0.1 | 1.3 | 0.6 | 1.7 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.6 | -- |
| Excluding food and energy | 2.1 | 1.4 | 1.1 | 0.7 | 1.1 | 1.3 | 0.8 | 1.4 | -- |
| Non-Res. Const. Cost Index[2] (quarterly) | 13.2 | -9.8 | -5.0 | -11.2 | -- | -- | -5.0 | -- | -- |
| Farm Product Price Index | 11.5 | -11.3* | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Crops | 26.7 | -22.9* | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Livestock | 2.1 | -0.8* | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| **Household Sector** | | | | | | | | | |
| Housing Starts (SAAR, 000's) | 29.2 | 20.0 | 30.6 | 27.6 | 24.2 | 28.3 | 34.1 | 35.7 | -- |
| % change | -39.6 | -31.6 | 130.3 | 54.2 | 55.1 | 139.8 | 166.4 | 176.7 | -- |
| New Housing Price Index | 0.7 | -9.0 | -1.7 | -6.3 | -3.6 | -1.4 | -0.2 | -- | -- |
| Edmonton | 1.0 | -11.2 | -4.1 | -9.4 | -6.5 | -3.3 | -2.4 | -- | -- |
| Calgary | 0.6 | -6.7 | 0.6 | -3.1 | -0.6 | 0.4 | 2.0 | -- | -- |
| MLS Average Resale Prices ($ 000's) | 351.4 | 340.5 | 352.9 | 355.5 | 344.3 | 348.2 | 357.9 | 361.2 | -- |
| % change | -1.5 | -3.1 | 7.4 | 7.5 | 6.4 | 5.1 | 10.3 | 7.7 | -- |
| Edmonton | 330.8 | 319.1 | 332.3 | 333.4 | 322.7 | 327.6 | 341.4 | 337.3 | -- |
| % change | -2.0 | -3.5 | 5.3 | 2.6 | -0.7 | 2.6 | 11.0 | 8.7 | -- |
| Calgary | 401.1 | 384.3 | 394.9 | 400.3 | 386.4 | 395.1 | 398.2 | 400.1 | -- |
| % change | -2.9 | -4.2 | 6.5 | 8.8 | 5.5 | 5.2 | 9.0 | 6.4 | -- |
| Retail Sales[3] | 0.2 | -8.3 | 6.3 | 1.9 | 1.0 | 6.6 | 11.2 | -- | -- |
| New Motor Vehicle Sales | -7.3 | -21.7 | 11.1 | 2.7 | -4.8 | 24.0 | 15.4 | -- | -- |
| Consumer Bankruptcies | 6,066 | 9,986 | 1321 | 634 | 684 | 637 | -- | -- | -- |
| % change | 27.2 | 64.6 | -5.8 | 4.6 | -1.7 | -9.8 | -- | -- | -- |
| **Business Sector** | | | | | | | | | |
| Rigs Drilling | 236 | 128 | 193 | 227 | 287 | 339 | 219 | 62 | 56 |
| % change NEW! | -2.1 | -45.6 | 41.5 | -3.8 | 9.3 | 42.3 | 103.5 | 51.9 | 76.4 |
| Goods Exports (customs based) | 34.6 | -37.3 | 13.7* | -14.1 | -- | -- | 18.5 | -- | -- |
| Energy NEW! | 42.5 | -41.4 | 25.8* | -12.4 | -- | -- | 32.8 | -- | -- |
| Agriculture | 32.0 | -10.2 | -17.8* | -24.9 | -- | -- | -9.6 | -- | -- |
| Total Farm Cash Receipts (quarterly) NEW! | 17.2 | -8.1 | -17.3 | -- | -- | -- | -17.3 | -- | -- |
| Manufacturing Shipments | 7.0 | -21.6 | 5.0 | -3.5 | -0.3 | 3.9 | 11.2 | -- | -- |
| Wholesale Trade[4] | 9.5 | -15.9 | -2.7 | -13.7 | -12.2 | -2.1 | 5.8 | -- | -- |
| Building Permits | -16.5 | -14.2 | 46.4 | 57.0 | 32.1 | 69.1 | 41.5 | -- | -- |
| Residential | -31.5 | -11.8 | 129.2 | 57.1 | 156.4 | 172.1 | 91.2 | -- | -- |
| Non-residential | 3.7 | -16.3 | -6.5 | 56.9 | -25.9 | 4.3 | 2.2 | -- | -- |
| Business Bankruptcies | 447 | 405 | 57 | 32 | 27 | 30 | -- | -- | -- |
| % change | -0.4 | -9.4 | -31.3 | 6.7 | -30.8 | -31.8 | -- | -- | -- |

Government of Alberta
Finance and Enterprise

Alberta

* YTD – year-to-date represents the change since the beginning of the year compared to the same period in the previous year.

[1] Quarterly; annual numbers are presented on a census year basis (July 1 - June 30).

[2] Average of Calgary and Edmonton

[3] The Retail Sales series was revised on April 23, 2010 and is no longer comparable with numbers in previous Bulletins.

[4] The Wholesale Trade series was revised on April 21, 2010 and is no longer comparable with numbers in previous Bulletins.

***Sources:*** All data is from Statistics Canada except Housing Starts (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation), MLS Average Resale Prices (Canadian Real Estate Association), Rigs Drilling (Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors) and Bankruptcies (Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada).

# Current Economic Indicators by Province